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ACIES ORDINATA

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For circulation among Ours only

Mental Prayer of the Sodalists

State of the Question.

In the 34th Rule of the Sodalities, where the daily duties common to all the Sodalists are set forth, we read : " *Let them devote at least a quarter of an hour to mental prayer* ".

It is doubtful whether many Directors insist enough on this very salutary rule, especially when we consider that mental prayer is precisely the way by which Sodalists may be moved to a spiritual life and, most of all, to the Apostolate. It is quite unnecessary to talk to Jesuits of the usefulness of mental prayer, We were long ago persuaded that the strength of our whole Society arises from the holy meditations contained in the golden Book of the Exercises. Neither our Holy Father Ignatius, nor our Saints, nor we ourselves, could have become what we are with God's grace, unless by meditating — first kindling the sacred fire in the Exercises, and then fostering it by daily meditation.

The only question here is : *Can meditation be seriously recommended to lay folk like our Sodalists?*

Many would deny that it could be done, or would certainly think one rash to attempt it. " How can I, " one of these doubting Directors might ask, — " how can I urge on men and women in the world, and still more, on young people, a method of prayer, which, to tell the truth, is often no light duty for men living in religious orders? How many priests complain, when making their retreats, that they can hardly make any progress in mental prayer! And now I am asked to induce my Sodalists to meditate, and that, not once in a while, but every day! No, Father : It's no use! It's exaggeration! It's Utopian! "

And nevertheless, there is the Rule, inculcating mental prayer on *all the Sodalists*. We know too that the old-time Sodalists, from the very beginning of the Sodality, devoted themselves to meditation with great diligence. And what is more, if you were to ask the Directors of the best Sodalities today, how they manage to get their lay Sodalists inflamed with such love for the things of God and such zeal for souls, they would answer : " First and foremost, by mental prayer, rightly taught and insisted on ".

The Key to the Difficulty.

The whole difficulty, in our opinion, can be done away with if you use a certain key, which we would almost dare to call magical. It is simple enough and has stood the test of experience. We often use it when we give retreats to laymen or clerics, and it has rarely failed us.

The greatest difficulty about mental prayer is the *false idea* which many have *that it is exceedingly difficult*, entirely out of the reach of the ordinary person, and only to be attained by monks or by Saints. This erroneous opinion is often confirmed by unsuitable and intricate instructions, in which mental prayer is represented as a very complicated affair, a kind of deep, speculative study, or a violent attempt to enter into some obscure mystical ecstasies. The consequence is that from the very beginning, the auditors shrink from mental prayer as something entirely too difficult, and they despair of ever getting any results from it, unless at the cost of heroic efforts.

Hence the Director who would induce his Sodalists to take up mental prayer, ought to propose two things to himself : The *first* is to excite in them *desire* for mental prayer : and the *second* is to show them a *very simple and easy method.*

Arouse a desire for meditation!

To descant on the advantages of mental prayer will be easy for any of Ours, and therefore, it would be superfluous to enumerate them here. We will simply indicate very briefly two of them which regard the Sodalists in a particular way, and which are drawn from the twofold end of the Sodality itself.

The *first* is that mental prayer is the *best road to that personal sanctification* which the Sodalist of Our Lady professes and which he strives to attain. Nothing stirs one more to virtue that converse with God, carried on in the depths of the soul, not in the words of another, but in our own. Our Blessed Lady is a most fitting example for Sodalists in this matter, since she " kept all these words in her heart ", (Luc. 2, 51) and lived for so long in such intimate relations with Christ.

The *second* is that meditation is the *foundation of all apostolic zeal*. " With desolation is all the land made desolate, because there is none that *considereth in the heart* ", says the Prophet Jeremias (12, 11). What better arouses the apostolic spirit, pity for souls headed for perdition, forgetfulness of self devoted and zealous labor, than the knowledge of the value of eternal things which comes from meditation ?

Teach an easy method!

But you will by no means arouse a desire for meditation unless at the same time, you teach the Sodalists the art of meditating easily, sweetly and fruitfully. And this art, as I have said, differs from other arts, in this, that it is already half learned, as soon as it is believed to be easy.

First of all, therefore, you must rid those you wish to teach, of all their fears and groundless difficulties. Say to them, for instance : " You do not find any difficulty in thinking about everyday occurrences, trifles of no importance, things which come and go. Then why should you deem it difficult to think of persons and things which are noble, most beautiful, and immortal ? You do not become tired by long conversation with an intimate friend ; words and ideas do not fail you. Can you then find nothing to say to your Divine Master, except what you have learned by heart, or what you can read to Him out of a printed book ? Is it so hard to talk with the one we love, that we cannot spend even a quarter of an hour in his presence ? Do you find the society of Christ and the Saints so tedious as all that ? "

In the second place, let the Director teach them that a person when meditating is not bound to go through any complicated system of internal acts ; nor to exercise his memory, intellect, will and affections, as if he were a machine. He need not answer a multiplicity of questions, such as : Who ? What ? Where ? By what means ? Why ? How ? When ? etc. But let him

1) *Read* something pious, e. g., a chapter from the Gospels, so as to have a definite subject ;

2) *Think* well, but quietly, over what he has read, and go into the meaning of it, as far as he can ;

3) *Ask* himself what he sees there which he can practice, and

4) *Resolve* seriously to do that ; and then *Pray* God to bless his resolution.

Experience shows that those to whom *a simple explanation* like this is given in the beginning of their spiritual life, easily understand it and put it in practice. " Is that all ? " they joyfully ask. " Well, I will certainly give it a trial ". They do so ; they get grace and pleasure out of it ; they keep up the custom and develop it.

There may be, in the beginning, what spiritual writers call " meditative reading ", but from that one may easily pass to a sort of mental prayer ; and in the meantime, the way is being prepared for true meditation.

How many people in the world, grown men, young men, children almost and even domestic servants, have thus acquired the habit of mental prayer ! But if you had tried to give them a long instruction on the subject, the most of them would have fled.

Now, by what we have said here, we do not mean to deny that the more elaborate introductions to mental prayer given out by great men like Fr. Roothaan, Fr. de Maumigny, etc., are, considered in themselves, much superior to the method indicated here. All we maintain is that in dealing with people in the world, it is better to explain the matter in the *most simple fashion* and *make it as easy as possible*, especially in the beginning ; because if we ask a great deal at the very start, we will get nothing from the most of our auditors.

Thirdly, if even this method of meditating seem too difficult to any one, let him propose to the Sodalists the " *three methods of prayer* " of our Holy Father Ignatius. What are they, after all, but methods of mental prayer, which, while very simple and easy, are at the same time very fruitful ? It would seem as if our Holy Father, — good judge of human nature that he was, — had felt the need of something which would enable those who do not know how to meditate, to pray mentally in some way.

The Sodality Director will do well to explain those three methods quite frequently, and to put

before the eyes of the Sodalists, how easy, and at the same time, how fruitful they are. Thus with very little trouble indeed, he will be able to teach even boys and girls the art of mental prayer, than which there is none more useful in the spiritual journey.

THE SODALIST'S INTRODUCTION
TO THE APOSTOLATE

Lay help in the direct care of souls.

In the direct care of souls, there are four ways in which lay apostles, both occasional and vocational, can be of help to priests, namely :

a) by laboring in *pious works and associations ;*

b) by serving on *Parish committees* or on their Sub-committees ;

c) by acting as *Home and District Workers;*

d) by collecting *information for the Parish Catalogue* (1) and keeping it up to date.

a) Helping in pious works.

Pious works connected with the care of souls, are religious societies, especially such as are parochial, having as their end, to provide for the needs of souls outside the church premises. Such are : giving instruction in Christian Doctrine ; Catholic societies for young men, for students, for working men, for women, etc.; Eucharistic works, societies for missions, retreats, the care of the poor, straightening out invalid marriages, and so on.

Laymen can forward these good works by taking part in them ; by aiding them with their good example, conversations, suggestions and information ; by encouraging likely persons to become members, etc.

The Pastor will be relieved of a great burden, if he has apt laymen at hand to act in his stead as lay presidents of those associations, deliver lectures or read papers in them, conduct discussions, keep order, etc.

But it is by *teaching catechism* and by *exercising works of charity,* that laymen can help the Pastor most of all, one indispensable condition being that they strive to render these services in such a way as to improve the moral and spiritual life of the children and of the poor entrusted to them.

b) Helping on Parish Committees.

Where the faithful are numerous, as is often the case in city parishes, the help of laymen may be profitably employed not only in various *pious* undertakings, but also in *others* which are profitable to souls,

A Parish Committee may be formed from the more fervent and more active Catholics... (or there may be two, one larger than the other with, let us say, 100 members, the other with 24 or only 12, the best men of all.). This Committee is to help the Pastor by advice and by action in any affair where he may wish to avail himself of it. It may meet once a month at least, or oftener if need be, the Pastor proposing his problems or present needs, or asking for help ; the members giving their opinions, or undertaking a share in whatever work is decided upon. (If there be two Committees, the larger may meet 4 times a year, to treat of more general matters, the smaller to meet monthly as outlined above).

It is plain that such a Committee has *no right to decide* anything, but has simply the privilege of conferring with the Pastor and helping him in the manner and degree that he may wish.

Again, to make the work systematic, such Parish Committees may usually be divided into Sub-committees, for example, 4 :

1) for *strictly religious events* such as General Communions, processions, religious solemnities, retreats, etc.;

2) for *charity and social work :*

3) for *instruction* in schools, catechism, young people's societies, etc. ;

4) for the *press* and for *propaganda* (newspapers, libraries, parish or diocesan bulletins, public demonstrations).

Such Sub-committees may meet rather often (e. g. weekly) ; they can tend to their work more diligently, provide for needs, forestall dangers. Whatever they have discussed and approved among themselves, they may afterwards propose to the whole Parish Committee and the Pastor.

In large and well organized parishes, it is usual to establish an *office* (or *Parish Secretariate*), which is open to all the faithful at certain hours every day, and there, matters which are not strictly spiritual, and do not require the direct intervention of a priest, are presented ; those of lesser moment are despatched at once by the Secretariate, while the more important are referred to the proper Sub-committee or to the Pastor.

In this way, almost all the needs of a parish can be easily and fully provided for, greater unity among the different activities and societies can be secured, and useless duplication of labor avoided.

Thus, a great deal of rather involved and difficult business can be done through lay apostles. Without them, priests would be overwhelmed with work, and perhaps would not be able to do the lesser part of what is absolutely necessary, especially in large cities, if souls are to be fully cared for.

Hence the Lay Apostolate in these Parish Committees, has a wonderful opportunity to promote and facilitate the care of souls.

c) Home and District Workers.

Besides this central and advisory Parish Committee, the Pastor needs executive helpers and workers, throughout the whole territory of the parish.

Indeed, the most important problem for pastors today is how to reach every individual in the parish, how to establish and preserve pastoral contact between themselves and each of their parishioners. The good pastor cannot content himself with waiting for his pious sheep to come to him of their own accord, but he goes out in search of those who do not come of themselves. In great cities, many never approach their pastor or enter the church ; nevertheless, they still have the faith, and if some parish organization gets in touch with them, they can easily be brought back to the practice of their religion.

Now, for the orderly establishment of this pastoral contact, lay apostles can serve in two capacities:

1) as Home and District Workers ;

2) as Collectors of information for the Parish Catalogue.

What then is a *Home Worker?* He is a fervent Catholic who acts as a confidential agent of the Pastor. It is his duty to keep an eye on the moral, religious and social condition of those who live in the same house with himself. This information he imparts to the Pastor or the Parish Committee as the case may require. He must also make sure that parish notices and literature reach all the families in his care. If, for instance, there is to be a marriage (whether lawful or not), or some one is sick or dying; if there be a case of want, or children to be baptized, special dangers or temptations, etc., the Home Worker informs the Pastor as discreetly as possible. On the other hand, if a Mission is to be given, or some feast to be celebrated, or some demonstration to be made, he will distribute the Pastor's invitations to each family. So too of church bulletins, calendars, etc.

Of course, where a house is very large, there may be more than one Home Worker, and where the system of tenements or apartments is not in vogue, one Home Worker will suffice for several houses.

When a newcomer takes up his residence in the parish (a fact which is taken note of by the public authorities in Continental Europe, but which is often ignored elsewhere), the proper Home Worker will visit him as soon as possible in the name of the Pastor, and leave a printed card, showing the time of Masses, Confessions, etc.

A *District Worker* has a certain part of the parish assigned to him, and his business is to see that the corresponding Home Workers discharge their duties properly, to supply their omissions, to bring them whatever has to be distributed, and to act as an intermediary between the Home Workers and the Pastor.

These Workers are also charged with notifying each family of the coming pastoral visit, and making necessary arrangments for it, as to time, etc. (1).

d) The Collection of information for the Parish Catalogue.

The foundation of all parochial organization is a catalogue which gives certain information about every Catholic family and unmarried person in the parish. It is the "liber de statu animarum", required by canon 470, sec. 1, of the Code of Canon Law. A sample page is given here.

Laymen can easily fill out such blanks with the help of the Home Workers. Two copies may be made, one for the Pastor, who may add confidential information in the second column, and place the card in his catalogue ; the other copy may be kept by the Parish Committee to be used by them for notations regarding charity, religious instruction, social aid, notices, etc.

Printed blanks may be used, permanent information being filled in with ink, and variable information in pencil.

When a Catholic leaves the parish, a fact which will soon be known by the Home Worker, the former's card may be sent to his new Pastor after all confidential information has been deleted.

When a family or an individual move into the parish, the proper Home Worker should notify

(1) This service has been found very satisfactory by priests and people in European cities where much poverty exists. It has resulted in the priest seeing every member of the family in one visit, and the people being enabled to receive him in a manner satisfactory to their natural desire to appear well: Everyone was at his best and the house (which may have sorely needed it before) was all cleaned up and tidy. Strange to relate, even rabid Socialists, consented to these formal receptions. Some good always resulted, and even conversions were then begun.

the layman charged with Catalogue work in that district.

The work of gathering this information requires great constancy, but it is much more useful than it might appear at first glance. It gives the Pastor and his lay helpers a true idea of the spiritual condition and temporal needs of the whole parish, and destroys all false optimism. It enables them, moreover, to make orderly provision for all needs and to reach every member of the flock, to follow them up when they move, and have a religious influence upon them.

Here is a very broad field for the Lay Apostolate. But it must be noted that every layman is not fit for the work. It requires men who are prudent, pious and faithful, both on account of the tact and judgment required and the confidential nature of much which will come to their notice, and because interior zeal and love for souls is a necessary condition for good work. Hence, it is here that Sodalists of Our Lady will find an unlimited opportunity of serving the Church and souls, in an orderly and permanent manner.

(To be continued).

Town ....

Street: .... *N.:* ....

Family name: ....

Husband's name: .... age: ....

Profession or Trade: .... religion: ....

Wife's name: .... age: ....

Profession or Trade: .... religion: ....

Children: 1. .... born..... religion.......

2. .... " "

3. .... " "

4. .... " "

5. .... " "

6. .... " "

7. .... " "

Notes about the children (1): ....

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Marriage: ....

Notes: ....

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(1) To save labor and guard better the information secured, it will probably be advisable in filling the blanks to use some such arbitrary signs as the foilowing.

On the line "*Marriage*" | = Catholic marriage; — = civil marriage only; O = invalid; × = mixed marriage, husband Catholic; + = mixed m., wife Catholic; $\overline{\times}$ or $\overline{+}$ married with agreement that children would be Catholics; $\underline{\times}$, $\underline{+}$ children to be non-Catholics; (+), (×) no agreement as to the religion of the children. On the line, "*Name of Husband*", | = goes to Mass; — = never goes to Mass; + = usually does not go to Mass. E = made Easter duty; N = did not make Easter duty. On the line "*Notes about the children*". B = Baptized by a Catholic; b = baptized by a non-Catholic; β = not baptized. C = made first Communion, D = goes to catechism.

The Parish Committee may use similar signs for its affairs. On the lines "Notes" one may put "Socialist", "Freemason", "Drunkard" or "Well-off and charitable", "Tertiary of St. Francis", etc.

What the Directors Said

at the Sodality Congress of Utopia

(Heard over the radio "Imagination")

Fr. Timid. The Sodality, in itself, is really a very wonderful work. But, alas! an angel might well shrink from taking it on himself. So many and so excellent are the gifts which the Director must possess, that a man of ordinary talent is forced to despair. Then, too, there are so many difficulties on the part of the Sodalists themselves. Why, in our part of the world, you can hardly start a Sodality, except behind barred doors, for fear of the rest of the clergy shouting that the Jesuits wish to grab everything for themselves and lord it over everybody else.

Fr. Sanguine. Well, let 'em shout! Why should we be always worrying about outsiders? Let them do their work and we'll do ours! We have our rights and privileges; we have our traditions! A man can go it alone, if he knows how to stick to his own rights! What have we elbows for, anyhow!

Fr. Modern. Yes, yes. But the Sodality must adapt itself to the temper of the times. For my part, I don't think the Sodality is modern enough. How can anything be of use today, which was adapted to by-gone centuries? We must follow easier and more recent methods.

Fr. Conservative. Not a bit of it! Anything that smacks of modern ideas is perfectly hateful and contemptible to me. Let us stay within the bounds of the ancient Sodality, and that strictly. Our policy should be: "What was done always and everywhere, and by everyone!" What was good yesterday, is good today. I would not readily permit even those liberties which Father Wernz's rules are full of.

Fr. Comfort. That's the doctrine! These modern Directors are bringing in all sorts of Sections; always looking for variety, putting a lot of vexatious and superfluous work on themselves. Why drag in such things? Where will we get the time for all of them? Do they think we're going to give up our afternoon nap and ruin our digestion? Besides, we must leave something for divine grace to do.

Fr. Strict. No. I cannot agree with you there. On the contrary, I hold even the Sodalists themselves to a stricter life than that. With me, the ordinary meeting lasts two hours, and I don't countenance talking and chattering before or after the meeting. I am very sparing too in admitting the Sodalists to the Apostolate, because it is full of dangers and easily leads one to become entirely engrossed in exterior works.

Fr. Absolute. That last remark ts a little too stiff, I think. I push the Apostolate, but a disciplined Apostolate. Discipline is the foundation of the Sodalities. In mine, everything proceeds in order, for the simple reason that I arrange everything myself. When I manage a Sodality, I don't want any advice from councils of awkward and inexperienced young men, — or adults either, for that matter. Let them obey, or stay out!

Fr. Simple. Well, I tried that too, but little by little, all the Sodalists left me. And yet, I talked so plainly and so simply to them! I always gave them the most wonderful examples from the Lives of the Saints and from the Golden Legend, and yet, —

Fr. Politic. You were wrong there, my dear Father. You must not force the truth on the Sodalists. The world wishes to be deceived, so let it have its wish. We must use certain pious frauds. Now take my case! Why, I'm so cunning in dealing with the Sodalists, that they never know precisely what I wish.

Fr. Pessimist. That's just where the difficulty comes in. One must act prudently and gently, and yet not be a politician. Now that's tremendously difficult. For if you act openly, punish faults, and demand solid virtues, you will be left alone; if, on the other hand, you loose the reins, everything goes to smash. If you neglect modern works, you will be called an old mossback, a *laudator temporis acti*; if you go in for them, you will make enemies for yourself among those who are working in the same field but along other lines and through other societies. If you start anything new, you have trouble with Superiors; if you don't begin, everything is as dead as a doornail. Hence, I don't believe any great results can be achieved through Sodalities: nevertheless, they must be fostered, because we will not have more success with other means.

Fr. Rightmind. You're wrong, my dear Fathers! Fr. Timid is in error, because he is too much afraid of the difficulties, and Fr. Sanguine goes to the opposite extreme of under-rating their importance. Fr. Modern, if his only criterion is «whatever pleases people just this minute», is badly off and Fr. Conservative with his absolute disregard of our times and their needs, is no better situated. Fr. Comfort of course, condemns himself when he puts his afternoon nap first and zeal second. The narrow-mindedness and gloomy strictness of Fr. Strict, dries up enthusiasm in the Sodalists. It's a grave mistake on the part of Fr. Absolute to confuse discipline with despotism; moreover, he destroys all initiative by re-

jecting the counsels of his Major Officers, and initiative in the Catholic laity is a desideratum of our day. Fr. Simple's methods were too child-like and there's too much of the serpent in Fr. Politic. But the worst error of all is made by Fr. Pessimist, when he persuades himself that on account of the difficulties and contradictions we experience, serious and energetic work is useless. With such an idea, we will never get anywhere. A Director of that sort, might well say to himself. « I said to rottenness, 'thou art my father' ». Who was ever able to achieve anything worth while, except at the cost of arduous and persistent labor and after conquering many difficulties? Look at the great generals and statesmen, the chiefs of socialism, presidents of great banks, kings of commerce, editors of big newspapers! What one of them ever realized his purposes without surmounting obstacles? Did they lose heart at once when trifling difficulties turned up! They did all this for passing fame or mere money. Shall it seem hard to us to do the same for the eternal salvation of souls and the love of Christ?

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Sodalist Saints and Blessed

Dear Father Editor,

It seems strange to me that one never encounters a *catalogue of the Saints, Blessed, and Venerable of the Sodality of Our Lady*, which is both *complete*, and *based on historical documents*. A very long list is given by Fr. Elder Mullan in his book "*The Sodality of Our Lady Studied in the Documents*", but it is not complete; in fact, he makes no mention of women saints. A religious of the Order of St. Camillus asked me recently if St. Camillus of Lellis had been a Sodalist-Fr. Mullan does not list him among the Saints of the Sodality, but other authors do. It would be a real service if one of our expert historians would furnish us with a complete list. It is a shame for us to be ignorant in such a matter.

And in this connection, I might say that the *history of the Sodality itself is still to be written* in a way that will be reasonably satisfactory to all. There is only one universal history of the Sodalities, so far as I know, — that of Fr. Delplace. But besides being somewhat old (it came out in 1884), it is rather a brief, pious compendium — though very good in its line — but hardly a historical composition. Moreover, the author is more concerned with citing examples, than with giving the subject the full treatment which would show in true historical fashion the importance of the Sodality idea, its developments and adaptations. The matter is certainly very vast, and does not lack difficulty, because it is not easy to show the connection between the obscure sanctuaries of the Sodalities and the public events and activities which were so intimately connected with the flourishing of Catholic affairs in such a large part of the world. But just for that reason, historical work of that sort would be proportionately more useful. It would also help much to arouse esteem for the Sodalities and to give them new life.

Again, if it should seem too difficult to write a complete history of the Sodalities of Our Lady, it would be very acceptable to have serious historical studies published on the subject. Such studies might proceed on wide lines and take quite a number of points together; for example, the part of the Sodalities in repressing Protestantism, Jansenism and Josephism; how (as your Reverence pointed out last year in "*Brevis Conspectus historiae Congregationum B. M. V.*" (1) our Sodalities paved the way for the *modern organizations of the Lay Apostolate*, which are so useful and necessary to the Church, etc. Treatment might be given on the same broad lines to the internal development of the Sodality itself, — how its membership, beginning with boys, was gradually extended to include men, and still later, women; other subjects might be: the activities of the old-time Sodalists and their evolution into the Sections of today, how the Sodality through its devotion to the Blessed Virgin, helped in the formation of so many Saints and sturdy Catholic men.

How glad I would be to read in "*A. O.*" at an early date, that our historians have at last commenced something big and serious, along the lines I have indicated.

Your Reverence's servant in Christ,

M. P.

(1) "*Acies Ordinata*", anno 1, pag. 55.

PRACTICAL QUESTIONS

Must dismissal be accepted by the person dismissed in order to be valid?

It would seem not.

For *admission* to be valid, two things are required: 1st, that the Director should manifest his intention of receiving the Candidate into the Sodality; and 2d, that the Candidate should manifest his acceptance of the admission. This is according to the 28th Rule.

But for *dismissal*, nothing is required, except that the Director manifest his will to that effect. Thus the 31st Rule says "Dismission is *decreed always by the Director*, but he shall consult the Council beforehand in cases of special difficulty." The Rules are silent about any other requisite, unless something be implied in the 30th Rule: "Sodalists once duly received into a Sodality remain members of it always, unless they give it up of their own accord or are dismissed as unworthy."

Hence, for *admission two conditions* are required one on the part of the Director, the other on the part of the Sodalist. To *lose one's standing* as a Sodalist it suffices that *either* of these conditions be revoked, by a manifest act.

But suppose — you say — that a hot-headed young

man, in a burst of passion, declares his will to leave the Sodality. Does he really cease to be a Sodalist? When he returns penitent and contrite the next day, the wise Director will easily pardon him his fit of temper. So it would seem that he did not cease to be a Sodalist.

No, I answer. He really ceased to be a Sodalist. Still if the fault was not too grievous, the Director can admit him on petition at once, without any particular formality. But it does not follow thence, that his exit from the Sodality was not complete; the young man's act was enough; the Director's ratification was unnecessary.

Division of a Sodality according to the age of the Sodalists. *A Director writes us*: I have concluded that I cannot keep unmarried women from 15 to 30 years of age in the same Sodality with those who are from 30 to 60. I have to talk to each class in a very different way. What can I do with these elderly ladies who are a drag on the Sodality? I would like to declare all who are over 30, honorary Sodalists, and have a special meeting for them only once a month. What does your Reverence think about that?

We treated a case like this last year at page 97 of the "*Acies Ordinata*" (Latin). Certainly, it is not expedient, to have such a variety of ages in the same Sodality. Either the older ones will lord it over the younger, or vice versa.

It is ridiculous too, if (as sometimes happens) the Young Ladies' Sodality, robed in white, takes its place in a procession of the Blessed Sacrament, and among the young girls of 18, there appear also some "young ladies" of sixty (also in white).

The remedy for the situation depends on the circumstances. *One solution* might be to translate the more venerable members to the *Married Women's Sodality*, and if such Sodality does not exist in your church, to form another for the purpose. But if this cannot be done (for example, because you have no time to manage two Sodalities), the more elderly may be declared *honorary members* and have a special meeting only very occasionally. *Or again*, let them come to a common meeting, but only as honorary members, and freely — when they will. Thus they can be gently removed from official positions in the Sodality and from the work of the Sodalities. But all the above is on the *supposition* that there is question of a Sodality of *Young Ladies*. Otherwise it would not be just to eliminate members when they have become mature in age and virtue.

A *third way* would be to make two divisions of the Sodality, each with its own Prefect and Council, a separate meeting and Director's talk once a month, its own consultations, Sections, etc. But let both divisions hold common meetings at the usual intervals, *solely for the devotional part* of the Sodality program. Such an arrangement must be made because among the older women (from 30 years and up), there are many who could not be excluded or treated as merely honorary members without real loss to the Sodality.

Transfer of Sodalists to other Sodalities.

We are asked: Where Sodalists receive the official letter for passing to another Sodality, and act upon it:

a) Are their names to be erased from the book o the Sodality they left?

b) If so, is this to be done at once, or only after they have been actually admitted into the second Sodality?

c) How shall the two Directors communicate with each other about this matter?

Ans. to a) Of course, their names are to be struck off the list of *ordinary* Sodalists, but nevertheless, a moral bond of union may be recognized which will allow their being retained in the book of the Sodality as if they were absent, but with a note "Passed to the Sodality of... on such a date, and admitted there". There is no reason why such a person should not be invited to celebrations or received as a guest at the meetings.

Ans. to b). The answer is included in *a*). His departure should be noted at once, and likewise his admission to the other Sodality. Immediately upon such admission, be will cease to be a member of the first.

Ans. to c). Rule 47 requires no more than an official letter signed by the Director and the Prefect, and delivered to the departing Sodalist. So, strictly speaking, that is enough. Nevertheless, well managed Sodalities, whenever they admit such persons, always send notice at once to the other Sodality. This seems to us a very laudable custom, productive of good order.

N. B. Someone might object:- Why so many little formalities? *I answer*: While these details may be little in themselves, nevertheless, they help the Sodalists to respect all Sodality business and to discharge their duties conscientiously, and thus the Sodality increases in order and strength.

Admitting guests. With us, says someone, the custom is to hold the ordinary meeting of the Sodality in the church, and any Sodalist is free to invite guests. Is this a praiseworthy custom?

By no means! The *ordinary meeting* of the Sodality should be *private*, and no one should be permitted to attend it, except with the Director's approval. The Sodalist's duties cannot be treated properly in the presence of outsiders.

CHRONICLE

Bombay. *The Cathedral Men's Sodality* celebrated its Golden Jubilee on Dec. 7th. Nearly all the Sodalities of Bombay and Bandra sent official representatives. Music, singing, and decorations within and without the Cathedral were such as to befit the occasion. Seven Men's Sodalities, including that of St. Xavier's College, attended the evening service and joined in the procession with banners and insignias. In closing the celebration, Most Rev. Alban Goodier, S. J., Archbishop of Bombay, dwelt on the influence of a well-directed Sodality in a parish, explaining how it is the source of personal holiness and of zeal for souls.

(Bombay Examiner).

Jamaica. *The Ladies' Sodality of Kingston*, founded in 1847, is quite active. Its Sections include: The *Mater Dolorosa*, to procure Masses for friendless souls in Purgatory. *The Living Rosary. St. Martha's Section*, to collect money for keeping the Cathedral clean. The *St. Aloysius' Section*, to provide candles and decorations for the altar. *The Tabernacle Society*, to furnish the Cathedral and poorer missions with cassocks, surplices, etc. Besides collecting for this purpose, the members meet and sew every two weeks, or oftener when required. *The Ladies of Charity Section*, which works for the poor and uninstructed, its members being divided into Collectors, Workers, and Visitors. The Workers assemble twice a month to sew and prepare clothing for poor persons recommended by priests and by the St. Vincent de Paul Society. The Visitors look after the spiritual and temporal needs of the poor throughout the city.

(Kingston Catholic Opinion).

Madrid. *The Young Men's Sodality* numbers about 900 and is guided by one Director and two assistant priests. There are two *Eucharistic Sections*, one for Daily Communion with 100 members, the other for Weekly Communion with from 250 to 300. Naturally, monthly Communion is obligatory on all. 36 Sodalists in the *Conference of St. Vincent de Paul* tend to 60 families. In two very necessitous and populous parishes, they manage two *Catechism* centers with 150 children in each. The *Hospitals* are visited weekly by about 15 of the "Luises" (as the Young Men's Sodality is everywhere called in Spain, St. Aloysius, "Luis", always being their secondary patron). Weekly *Academies* are held in which papers are read touching on some point of the studies engaged in by the particular group of Sodalists, e. g. Law, Medicine, Sciences, etc. The *Library*, we are assured, is very well patronized. A foot-ball field and a "fronton" for playing "pelota" (Spanish hand-ball) gives room for *Sport*, and they have a little *Theatre* of their own in which the works of the Sodalists are produced.

Besides the works of zeal already noticed, this Sodality maintains a *Night-school for Working-boys*. The students are divided into three groups; the first receive instruction in the three R's; the second are prepared for clerking, typewriting, bookkeeping, etc.; the third group is coached to enter the Jesuit Trade and Engineering School of Madrid (I. C. A. I.), where tuition is completely free for working-men. All receive practical religious instruction.

Classes are held on weekdays from 7 to 8.30 p.m. The student must be 14 years of age in order to enter. 20 Sodalists form the faculty.

It may easily be imagined what great advantages flow from this work. The Sodalists through contact with poorer boys, learn to appreciate better the advantages of their own position, and to sympathize sincerely with the less fortunate, and there consequently arises between them and their pupils a truly Christian friendship and affection. The course is long and it takes a strong spirit of sacrifice to carry it through. The pupils, besides obtaining instruction which is an immediate help towards profitable employment, also gain a very good theoretical and practical knowledge of their religion, and have a very flourishing Sodality of their own.

What impresses them most, and what gives force to explanations of religion or exhortations to the reception of the Sacraments, is the fact that their teachers practice what they preach. The further knowledge that the Sodalists receive no remuneration for their work, but carry it on purely for the love of God, and at the sacrifice of time and of opportunities for legitimate pleasure, gains the hearts of even the roughest of the boys; and years after they have graduated from the Night-school, they continue to manifest great affection for their former masters.

(Madrid Estrella del Mar).

United States. At *Mt. St. Michael's, Hillyard, Wash.*, the House of Studies of the California Province, where there are about 100 philosophers from the Provinces of England, Upper Canada, and the United States, a *Sodality Academy* was founded in October, 1924, in response to the desire of a number of philosophers, who appreciate the possibilities of the Sodality and wish to learn what they can about it. About 70 attend the meetings which are held once every three weeks. It is planned to cover all Sodality questions in three years. Accordingly, the President, Mr. T. L. Foran (Md.-N.Y.), has begun to issue mimeographed synopses which, besides facilitating the execution of the plan, are also very helpful to the Academicians in the preparation of their papers. The subjects treated thus far include: *A General Survey of the Sodality, Its Ends and Means; Origin and Development; The Sodality, an Answer to the Needs of our Times. Our Lady's Part in the Sodality; The Sodalists; Government in the Sodality.* Under these general heads, many interesting points are touched upon, such as, *The Principle of Selection; The Inner Circle.* Numerous and definite references joined to good order and graphic typing, give these synopses a permanent value; some of them will probably be useful afterwards, for Directors. Even within the bare limits of a synopsis, the author is often eloquent, but especially so, when touching on the great good we can do through the Sodality, if we only have team-work. The papers presented by the Academicians thus far, show a fine spirit of work and enthusiasm. Five provinces at least, have had representatives on the floor as is indicated by the papers which have been sent to the Central Secretariate. Much of the success of the Academy is to be attributed to the earnestness and experience of its Moderator, Fr. A. A. Dinand, who has insisted much on zeal for the Sodality as a solid expression of a Jesuit's devotion to the Blessed Virgin.

With every copy of "*Acies Ordinata*" for February, there is also being sent a copy of the "**Little Catechism of the Sodality of Our Lady**" by Fr. Adalbert Bangha.

This Catechism may be sold to externs. The prices are: single copies, 1 lira; 10 copies, 8 lire; 100 copies, 70 lire.

Checks or drafts on American or English banks payable in **dollars** or **pounds** respectively are more advantageous to us and much easier to cash.

SODALITIES OF OUR LADY

Aggregated to the Prima Primaria

from January 1 to December 31, 1924

	Priest and Clerics	Men	Young Men	Men Students	Children Boys	Married Women	Married and Single Women	Unmarried women and Girls	Women Stud.	Both sexes	Totals
EUROPE											
Austria . . .		1	5	3	6	9		42	1	7	74
Belgium . . .		1	3				1	13			18
Czechoslovakia			1	7		2	4	9	1	4	28
England . . .						9	1	2		3	15
France . . .			4	2				38		2	46
Germany . .	1	4	37	4	1	6		124	3		180
Holland . . .	1	3	15	2	1	5	3	15	1	1	47
Hungary . . .		8		7			2	14	9		40
Ireland . . .		1					3	6			10
Italy	2		10	3	1	2	3	8		1	31
Jugoslavia . .	1	1	3	2	1	6	1	7	3		25
Poland . . .	1	4	4	30	1	7		13	25	1	86
Portugal . . .		1	1	1	4	3		14		1	25
Roumania . .		1						1	1		3
Spain		3	7	1		1	1	5		1	19
Switzerland . .		3	7	2				21		1	34
Various places		1				1		2			4
ASIA											
China										1	1
India	1	6	7	1	4	9	5	16		3	52
Java				1					2		3
Philippines . .							1	1			2
Syria			1								1
AMERICA											
Argentine . .		1			3			1			5
Brazil		1	7	5	2			13			28
Canada . . .		1	1		1			17			20
Chile		1	2				1	4			8
Colombia . .		1			1	1					3
Mexico . . .			3				1	2		1	7
United States .	1	9	23	5	10	55	25	228	2	23	381
Various places		1			2			3			6
AFRICA											
Algeria . . .								1			1
Egypt		1						1			2
Congo (Belg.) .		1				1		1			3
Madagascar . .		12				13		1		2	26
Various places.			1			1					4
AUSTRALIA					1		2	7			10
Total	8	68	142	76	39	131	54	630*	48	52	**1,248**

The aggregations of 1924, added to those formerly made, give a Grand Total of 48,183.

The largest number of aggregations was made in the United States. Then follow 2) Germany, 3) Poland, 4) Austria, 5) India, 6) Holland, 7) France, 8) Hungary, 9) Switzerland, 10) Italy.

* 41 of these ars "Children of Mary."

OVER THE TELEPHONE

"Father, this is a Tertian speaking. I'm down here at St. Henry's, ending up a mission, and the Pastor has told me to announce tomorrow that any man of the congregation who has made the mission is welcome to become a member of the Men's Sodality of Our Lady, and all he has to do is to come up to the rail with the rest, receive the medal, and sign the book. Isn't there something awfully sudden about this? Has the Pastor the right to admit a man that way? I thought the Instructor of Tertians told us something different."

"Well, I don't know what the Instructor may have told you, but the 23d of the Common Rules of the Sodalities says that 'those who wish to enter will *address their application* to the Director'. Then, it says that '*Candidates* should especially be persons of *irreproachable conduct*'; and 'they must be *resolved* upon being faithful in the *observance* of the *Rules*'.

"Now, in your Pastor's plan of admission, I don't see any *application to enter* on the part of the new men. The Rules call them '*Candidates*', but your Pastor has nominated them before they even knew that they were in the running. Again, it's clear that no Sodalist is standing *sponsor* for these gentlemen, and you have no assurance that the town drunkard will not present himself for the blue ribbon, in all the newness of his fervor, which may be drowned next week. Besides, there's no demand being made of them that they learn what the *Rules* are and, of course, they can't be expected to be *resolved* to keep Rules of which they have no knowledge.".

"Moreover, the 24th Rule, says that before the *final* reception, there shall be a *probation* of not less than *two months*. And in all that time, the Candidate 'is obliged to fulfill without exception all the *duties* which the Sodality imposes on its members'. But in your case, the *first* reception is made the final one, — *probation* isn't even mentioned. Now, even if we grant for argument that your mission is a *great trial* for these men, still, it does not last two months, and even in the course of the week, they are not fulfilling the peculiar duties of Sodalists!"

"Why, Father, you take my breath away. I had no notion that the rules were so explicit. I'll tell the Pastor right away, that it just can't be done, and..."

"Well, you will be the best judge of that. Don't forget though, that he probably began running Sodalities thirty years ago, so you'll probably need all your tact. If he is the official Director of the Sodality, and if he wishes to admit those men in that way, *he can do so in legal strictness.* I just cited the Rules to show the spirit of the Sodality. We'll publish a little article on the subject some time and maybe he will read it and see the light."

Editor: *Lawrence E. O'Keeffe, S. J.*

Superiorum permissu.

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